



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Karen Goodman Minter
Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center
847-967-4823 office / 847-946-6069 cell
Karen.minter@ilhmec.org

SPOTS OF LIGHT: TO BE A WOMAN IN THE HOLOCAUST

**NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE OF YAD VASHEM EXHIBITION FOCUSES
ON THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN THE HOLOCAUST
Opens June 24 at *Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center***

SKOKIE, IL – *Spots of Light: To be a Woman in the Holocaust* is the first international exhibition to focus exclusively on women and their experiences during the Holocaust. This large scale video-art based exhibition conveys the strength, initiative, and courage of these remarkable women. This inspirational landmark exhibit reveals that even in the most difficult of circumstances, human beings can maintain those values which are the foundation of humanity: motherhood, friendship, faith and love.

This compelling and moving exhibition attempts to convey the human story that lurks behind the historical account of the Holocaust experience. More than two million women were murdered during the Holocaust. Jewish women inhabited a society that was largely conservative and patriarchal, with males as heads of households and women fulfilling traditional roles at home or helping to make a living. Jewish women assumed the main family role best described as the “affirmation of life” – the attempt to survive in any situation.

“We are proud to partner with Yad Vashem to present the North American premiere of this stunning exhibition, added Richard S. Hirschhaut, Executive Director of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. “ The stories of these remarkable women are so beautifully and poignantly conveyed that we feel an immediate connection. The women featured are not mere statistics—they are our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters.”

Within the exhibition, responses to the Holocaust are grouped by the following themes: love; motherhood; caring for others; womanhood; partisans and underground; everyday life; friendship; faith; food; and arts. While some responses that are explored were uniquely individual, others turn out to have been typical of many women.

Spots of Light features newly commissioned work by renowned Israeli artist Michal Rovner. The video installation, *To Be a Human Being*, interweaves segments of interviews with 10 female Holocaust survivors, and is the pinnacle of exhibition’s conceptual paradigm.

Arielle Weininger, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions for the Illinois Holocaust Museum, has augmented the exhibition with the stories and precious heirlooms of local female Holocaust survivors. Over 50 artifacts from the Museum’s permanent collection will be on display. These include never before displayed objects including: three pieces of original artwork from the Theresienstadt concentration camp-ghetto; a mandolin-banjo from the Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons camp owned by a survivor who was a member of the Auschwitz women’s orchestra; and a silver necklace found by an American GI at the liberation of Dachau.

(more)

Spots of Light: To be a Woman in the Holocaust
Page of 2 of 2

Weininger notes, "Indeed, each of these locally collected artifacts evokes an emotional connection – a watercolor made by a child in hiding recalls the touching story of that child's mother who would tell her fairy tales of the outside world and encourage her to draw the scenes; the recipe for dumplings remembered from home that was jotted down in a woman's journal as she imagined the world and food that she once had outside of the camp."

Spots of Light: To be a Woman in the Holocaust is a production of the Museums Division, Yad Vashem. Curator: Yehudit Inbar.

Likely the last international institution of its kind built with the active participation of Holocaust survivors, the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center is the largest facility in the Midwest dedicated to preserving the memories of those lost in the Holocaust and to teaching current generations to fight hatred, indifference and genocide in today's world. The Museum is located at 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie. The Museum is open Monday through Friday: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Thursday evenings: 5:00- 8:00 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

###